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ABSTRACT

Part of an effort to evaluate the 1978 Missouri State Master Plan for Higher Education, this report reexamines the enrollment projections contained in the plan to determine whether those projections are adequate to serve as a basis for statewide higher education planning efforts for the remainder of the 1980s and the early 1990s. The first section of the report describes recent demographic trends related to college enrollments. This analysis indicates that, while the number of young people who will be entering the traditional college-age cohort will decline by over 23% statewide, the change will not be uniform across subregions and will have a differential effect on specific institutions. In addition, the report indicates that changes in the racial mix of the traditional college-age cohort will affect high school graduation and college attendance rates, as will the trend of more rapid growth in the rural population of the state. The next section of the report focuses on enrollment projections, first describing the assumptions used and then reporting a projected statewide enrollment for 1993 that would be 21.5% below that of 1981. A comparison of master plan projections to actual 1980 enrollments and revised projections for 1985 and 1990 conclude the report. (LAL)

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DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN MISSOURI'S POPULATION AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

MASTER PLAN III ASSESSMENT
PROJECT REPORT NUMBER THREE

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MISSOURI COORDINATING BOARD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

JUNE 1983

JC 840 099

MASTER PLAN III ASSESSMENT PROJECT REPORT SERIES

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MISSOURI PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Harris-Stowe State College

Lincoln University

Missouri Southern State College

Missouri Western State College

Northeast Missouri State University

Northwest Missouri State University

Southeast Missouri State University

Southwest Missouri State University
- West Plains Residence Center

University of Missouri
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- University of Missouri-Kansas City
- University of Missouri-Rolla
- University of Missouri-St. Louis

PUBLIC COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGES

Crowder College

East Central College

Jefferson College

Metropolitan Community Colleges
- Longview Community College
- Maple Woods Community College
- Penn Valley Community College
- Pioneer Community College

Mineral Area College

Moberly Area Junior College

St. Louis Community College
- St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley
- St. Louis Community College at Forest Park
- St. Louis Community College at Meramec

State Fair Community College

Three Rivers Community College

Trenton Junior College

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Foreword

The steady decline in state and federal support of higher education prompted the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education in December 1981 to direct its staff to evaluate the State Master Plan for Higher Education, **Master Plan III**, published in 1978.

The Master Plan III Assessment Project was organized to describe major trends in Missouri over the past several years and the implications of these trends for higher education; to project the trends for the future and their implications for higher education in Missouri; and to specify a range of public policy alternatives available to the educational and political decision makers who hold the responsibility for higher education.

The issues of access, diversity, and funding comprise the major areas of study for the Master Plan III Assessment Project and are the issues for which public policy alternatives will be developed. This report is the third descriptive report on the trends in Missouri higher education.

Shaila R. Aery
Commissioner of Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of the Master Plan III Assessment Project it was observed that, while enrollments were still increasing at that time, they had not reached the level published in the planning document as the "optimistic" scenario for 1980. As a part of the assignment to assess the master plan the Coordinating Board directed its staff to reexamine the enrollment projections contained in the plan to determine whether those predictions were adequate to serve as a basis for statewide higher education planning efforts for the remainder of the 1980's and early 1990's. This report describes the process used and the results of that examination.

The first section of the report describes recent demographic trends related to college enrollments. This analysis indicates that, while the number of young people who will be entering the traditional college age cohort will decline by over 23 percent statewide within the next decade, the change in this age cohort will not be at all uniform across the subregions of Missouri. Thus, a differential effect on specific institutions can be expected. The analysis of demographic trends also suggests that increasing the high school graduation rate and, presumably, the college attendance rate, will be relatively more difficult than in the recent past due to changes in the racial mix of the traditional college age cohort. The trend of more rapid growth in the rural population of the state and its potential effects on college attendance is also discussed, as is the growth and, toward the later part of the decade, decline in the age group from which nontraditional students have been drawn in the greatest numbers.

The portion of the report focusing on enrollment projections first describes the assumptions used and then reports a projected statewide enrollment for 1993 that would be 21.5 percent below the 1981 level. These projections are less optimistic than those published in Master Plan III due to the different assumptions used. These assumptions are based primarily on the demographic trends described in the first section, but additional assumptions regarding the attendance of older students are key to the difference between these projections and those in the master plan. Assumptions regarding the competiveness of the institutions within age groups and geographic regions are basic to the markedly different trends forecast for the various sectors of Missouri higher education.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

This section of the report will describe some of the relevant highlights of recent demographic trends as reflected in the 1980 U.S. Census for Missouri. The objective is to provide some insight into the possible effects of these trends on college enrollments, as well as the possible adjustments in recruiting and in the missions of some institutions which might result from these trends. As in any social research, one cannot assume that future trends will follow historical precedent; but the objective here is to describe what might be expected on the basis of historic trends and other relevant factors in the environment.

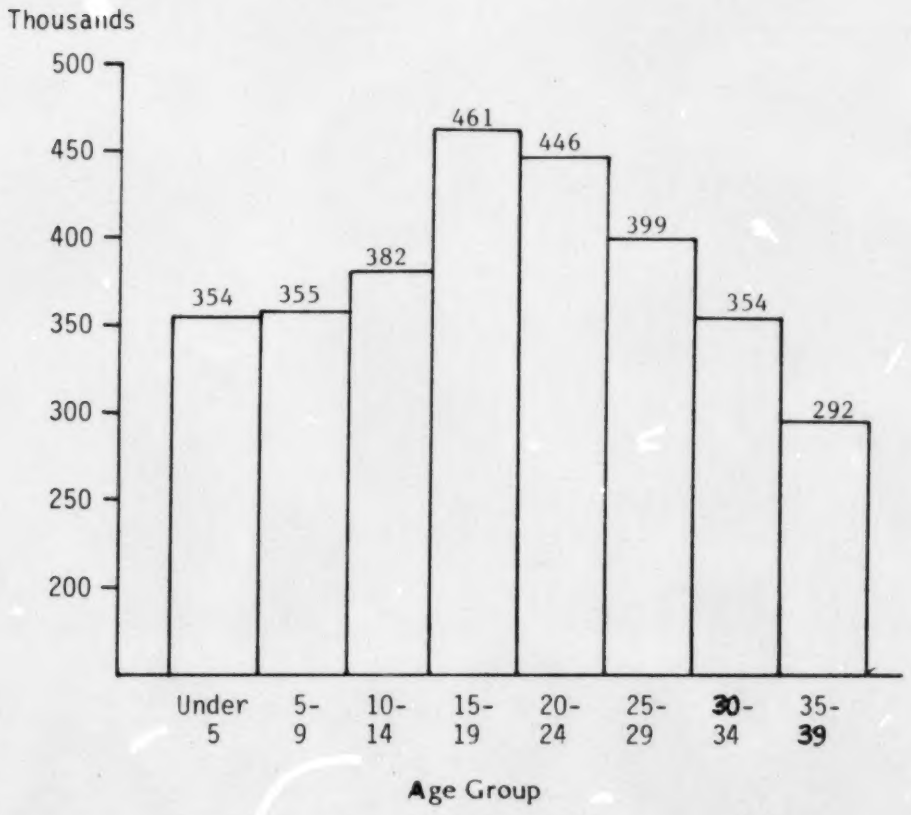
Age of Population

One observation about the Missouri and U.S. populations which has already gained great attention is the relative decline in the number of young people.

This report will describe some of the specific attributes of this phenomenon in Missouri. To facilitate comprehension of the data presented here and in other parts of the report the state has been divided into seven regions which correspond to the five statutorily defined service areas of the regional universities, except that the St. Louis and Kansas City/St. Joseph areas are separated into distinct units. This was done to reduce the distortion caused by including, for example, the St. Charles County statistics with those for the Northeast district.

Display #1 illustrates the "bulge" in the state population represented by those who were in the 15 to 19 and the 20 to 24 year old age brackets in 1980 and, to a lesser extent, the two age brackets on either side. Though the aggregation of the population into five year brackets obscures some significant details regarding the exact point at which the youthful population falls off most precipitously, Display #1 represents reasonably well the fact that in 1983 there are still a relatively large number of people in the prime college attendance age range of 18 to 24. The full effects of the developing decline in this age group are clearly some time away. Furthermore, it may be helpful to note that the five year age group which will begin entering college about five years from now is of approximately the same size as that five year age group which began entering higher education about 20 years ago.

DISPLAY #1. MISSOURI'S POPULATION BY AGE, 1980 CENSUS

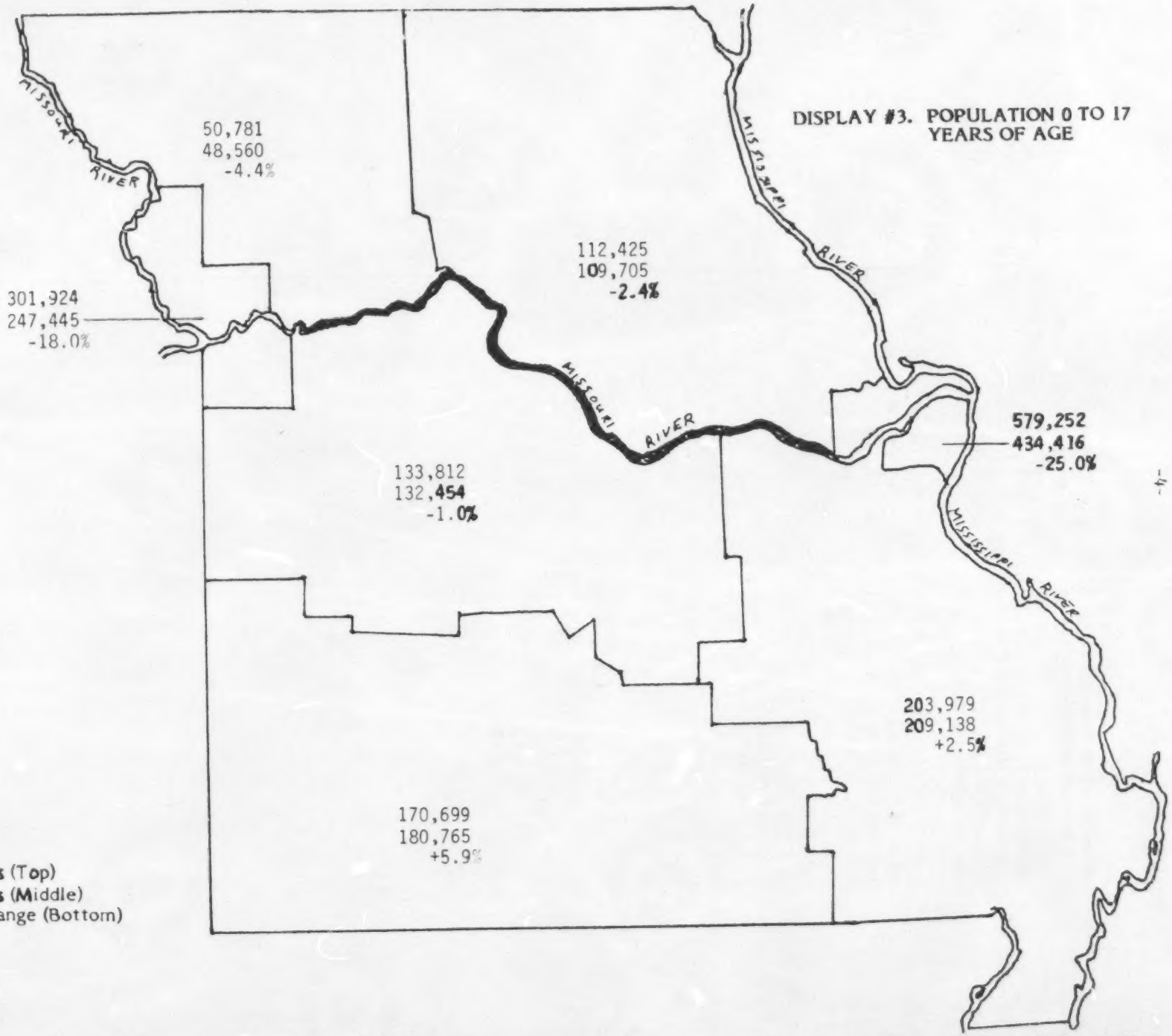


Another way of viewing the changing trend in the traditional college attendance age group is to examine the change between the 1970 Census and the 1980 Census in the number of persons aged 0 to 17 years. Though these statistics have some shortcomings due to the aggregation of a wide age span and the particular years for which the Census is taken, they nonetheless provide some convenient measures of the relative differences in the number of young people who will be moving through the public school system, into postsecondary education, and into the job market during the 1980's and 1990's versus the number which did so in the last decade or so. Display #2 illustrates that, while Missouri's total population grew by 240,185 people between 1970 and 1980, the 0 to 17 year old age cohort shrank by 190,389 people or 12.3 percent.

DISPLAY #2. CHANGE IN TOTAL POPULATION AND 0 TO 17 AGE GROUP, 1970 TO 1980 CENSUS

Region	Total Population			0 to 17 Age Group		
	1970	1980	Change	1970	1980	Change
St. Louis/ St. Charles	1,666,543	1,571,088	-95,455	579,252	434,416	-144,836
Kansas City/ St. Joseph	896,876	899,983	3,107	301,924	247,445	-54,479
Central	436,989	485,867	48,878	133,812	132,454	-1,358
Northeast	375,836	420,932	45,096	112,425	109,705	-2,720
Northwest	170,749	179,843	9,094	50,781	48,560	-2,221
Southeast	575,096	689,632	114,536	203,979	209,138	5,159
Southwest	554,412	669,342	114,930	170,699	180,765	10,066
TOTAL	4,676,501	4,916,687	240,186	1,552,872	1,362,483	-190,389

As with the U.S. population, however, Missouri's change in the 0 to 17 age bracket was not uniformly distributed, as illustrated on Display #3 by the 5.9 percent growth in the Southwest region versus the 25 percent decline in the St. Louis area. Of course, the numbers involved are very different in magnitude and the St. Louis area remains the single largest population center.


DISPLAY #3. POPULATION 0 TO 17 YEARS OF AGE
MISSOURI RIVER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
50,781
48,560
-4.4%
112,425
109,705
-2.4%
301,924
247,445
-18.0%
579,252
434,416
-25.0%
133,812
132,454
-1.0%
203,979
209,138
+2.5%
170,699
180,765
+5.9%
1970 Census (Top)
1980 Census (Middle)
Percent Change (Bottom)

It is worth noting though that the St. Louis area contained approximately 37 percent of the 0 to 17 year old population in 1970 and, according to reports on the geographic origin of students, accounted for around 41 percent of the undergraduate students enrolled in Missouri who were from within the state as late as fall 1981. The fact that the St. Louis area accounted for only 32 percent of a smaller number of 0 to 17 year olds by 1980 may suggest some changes in recruiting or enrollment practices for those institutions recruiting heavily from the St. Louis area. Variations on this analysis apply to each region and to each institution.

DISPLAY #4. GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FALL 1981, ALL SECTORS

Region	Headcount Missouri	% of Missouri Subtotal	% of Total
St. Louis/St. Charles	65,776	41.7%	36.7%
Kansas City/St. Joseph	30,427	19.3%	17.0%
Central	11,739	7.4%	6.5%
Northeast	10,597	6.7%	5.9%
Northwest	4,415	2.8%	2.5%
Southeast	17,893	11.3%	10.0%
Southwest	17,070	10.8%	9.5%
Subtotal from Missouri	157,917	100.0%	
Other States	19,713	NA	11.0%
Foreign	1,814	NA	1.0%
TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE	179,444		100%

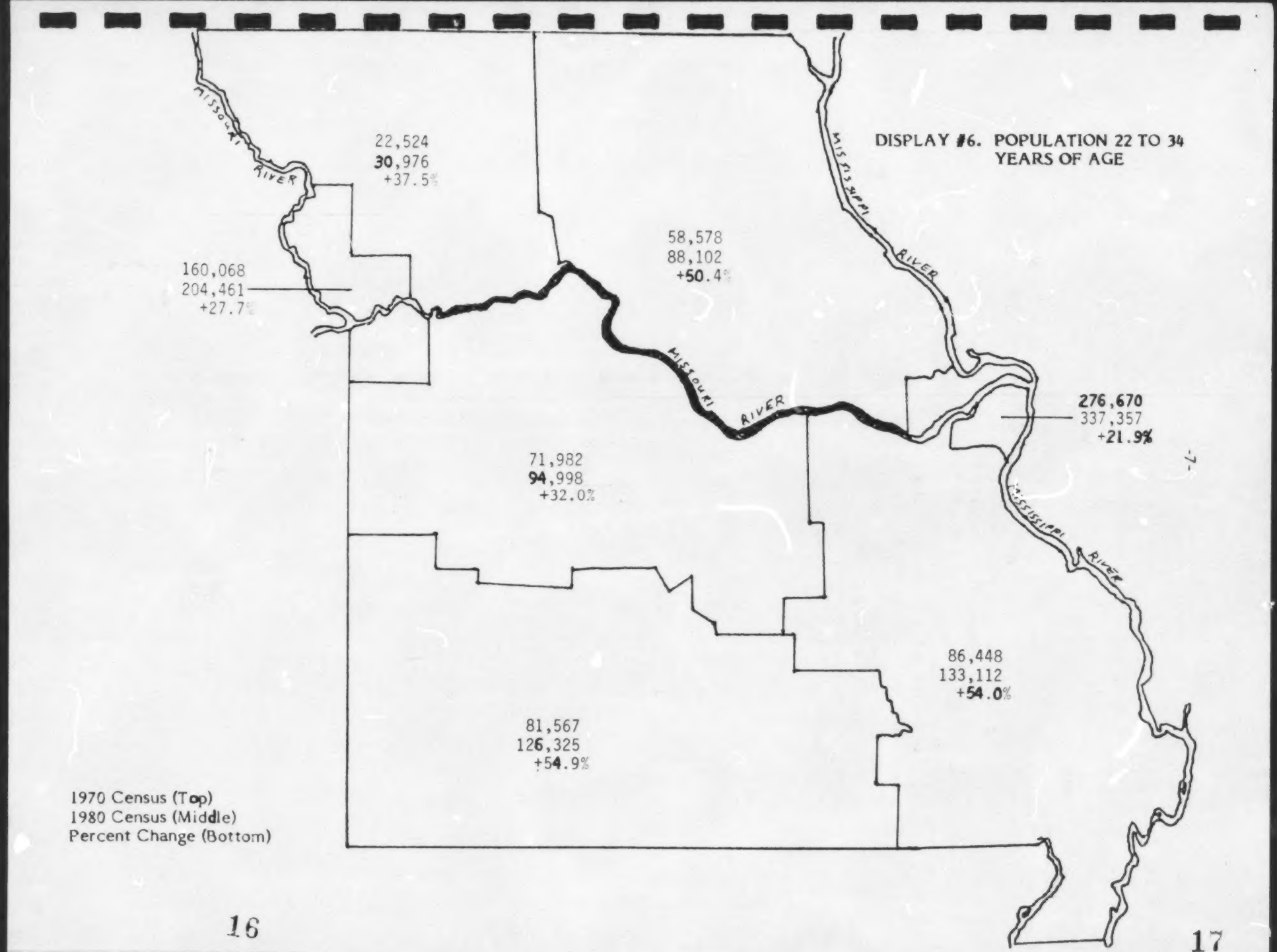
As is indicated in Display #5, Missouri's higher education institutions are still highly dependent on traditional age students for the majority of their enrollment. In fact, Display #5 understates this dependency because the total enrollment figures include graduate students who, as the CBHE Fact Book tables which are summarized by Display #5 indicate, account for a significant proportion of those students over 24 years old at all the institutions except the community colleges. Furthermore, this age group produces the vast majority of full-time students. Thus, while colleges and universities may attract an increasing number of older students, indications are that these students will be primarily part-time. Except at the community colleges, where a very large proportion of the older students are currently enrolled, significant efforts to attract more nontraditional students are likely to complicate financial problems with the need to extend evening schedules, offer full student services to part-time students, etc.

DISPLAY #5. AGE DATA FOR ALL SECTORS AND LEVELS, FALL 1981

Age	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Under 18	5,160	1,292	6,452
18 to 19	50,974	6,337	57,311
20 to 21	38,103	7,841	45,944
22 to 24	20,619	13,527	34,146
Total Under 25	**114,856**	**28,997**	**143,853**
Total Enrollment	**136,888**	**83,034**	**219,922**
% of Total Under 25	**83.9%**	**34.9%**	**65.4%**

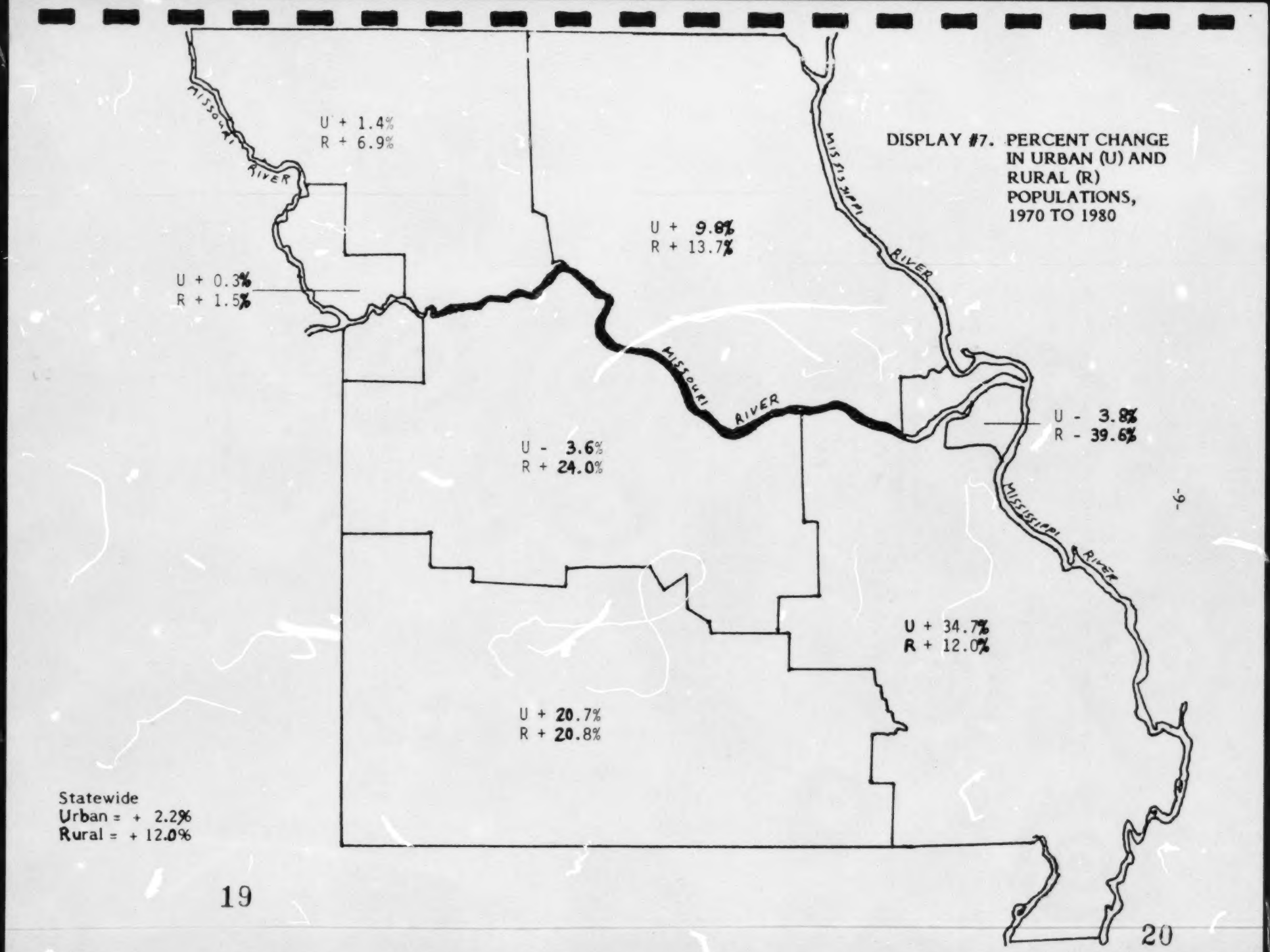
Source: Fact Book: Higher Education in Missouri, 1982, Tables II-2A-G

It should be noted that, as indicated in Display #6, the 22 to 34 year old population grew rapidly in all regions of the state between 1970 and 1980. This group is both large in numbers and more prone than previous groups to participate in higher education. To the extent that this group can be attracted to further its education or return for retraining, there is a considerable opportunity for offsetting some of the decline in the traditional college attendance age group. However, as indicated earlier, the trends up to the present have indicated the vast majority of these students will attend part-time and the age group in general has already completed extensive higher education.


DISPLAY #6. POPULATION 22 TO 34 YEARS OF AGE
MISSOURI RIVER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
22,524
30,976
+37.5%
58,578
88,102
+50.4%
160,068
204,461
+27.7%
276,670
337,357
+21.9%
71,982
94,998
+32.0%
86,448
133,112
+54.0%
81,567
126,325
+54.9%
1970 Census (Top)
1980 Census (Middle)
Percent Change (Bottom)

Urban/Rural Distribution of Population

Between 1970 and 1980 Missouri, much like the United States in general, reversed a generations long trend toward becoming increasingly urban. As indicated in Display #7, the rural population grew faster in both raw numbers and percentage, though the overwhelming majority of the population is still urban. This trend is noted herein because, historically, urban centers have accounted for a disproportionate share of college enrollments. The example of the St. Louis area, which accounts for over 40 percent of the state's enrollment of undergraduates who are from Missouri, was mentioned earlier. Since much of the rural growth would appear to be due to the rise of communities just outside areas officially defined as urban, it would be unwise to make too much of this trend. Nonetheless, the trend, if sustained, does suggest some impact on college recruiting and, possibly, on programs. It would appear that college recruitment efforts may require more attention to relatively small and dispersed communities as well as somewhat greater effort to address the educational needs of rural youth.



DISPLAY #7. PERCENT CHANGE IN URBAN (U) AND RURAL (R) POPULATIONS, 1970 TO 1980

Race/Ethnic Mix of Population

While the number of young people 0 to 17 years of age declined between 1970 and 1980, the number of nonwhites in this age group did not decline as fast as the number of white children. In fact, as Display #8 indicates, the total of blacks and other minority young people in this group barely declined at all. Thus, while young people of these races are still very much a minority, they account for a slightly larger portion of the youthful population of the state than they did ten years ago. This fact is relevant to the present analysis because, as David Breneman and others have pointed out, minority students as a group have a markedly lower high school completion rate than do white students. In Breneman's words, "In the absence of concerted action to raise the completion rates of blacks and Hispanics, their increasing numbers in the age group will cause the high school graduation rate to fall- not rise- over the next 15 years."[1]

DISPLAY #8. MISSOURI'S POPULATION BY AGE AND RACE, 1980 CENSUS

Age Group	Total	White	% of Total	Black	% of Total	Other	% of Total
Under 5	354,114	300,625	84.9%	47,692	13.5%	5,797	1.6%
5 to 9	355,486	301,009	84.7%	48,926	13.8%	5,551	1.6%
10 to 14	382,186	325,964	85.3%	51,552	13.5%	4,670	1.2%
15 to 19	461,276	397,636	86.2%	57,912	12.6%	5,728	1.2%
20 to 24	445,661	386,543	86.7%	52,627	11.8%	6,491	1.5%
25 to 29	398,461	349,443	87.7%	42,589	10.7%	6,429	1.6%
30 to 34	354,312	314,202	88.7%	34,518	9.7%	5,592	1.6%
35 to 39	291,752	260,570	89.3%	27,227	9.3%	3,955	1.4%

Though there are direct steps that institutions of higher education can take to increase the enrollment of those minority students who do graduate from high school, much of what can be done to improve minority student education is only indirectly affected by colleges and universities. Though there have been some gains in recent decades, minority students are still more likely than their white contemporaries to be socioeconomically disadvantaged. Addressing these problems is clearly increasingly difficult for the colleges and universities of the state given the financial problems presented the institutions, but the need to do so for both ethical and economic reasons is, if anything, increasing. As the culture becomes increasingly demanding of advanced study and training for employment, the state and the nation cannot afford to leave a significant portion of the population out of that development.

Indirectly, the colleges and universities of the state can affect changes in minority student participation, as well as the participation of the socioeconomically disadvantaged white youth, through improvements in the quality of teacher education programs. Ironically, current demographic trends, if properly addressed, may present an excellent opportunity for making such improvements since these trends may produce pressures for curtailment in the size of teacher education programs. With concerted effort, it is conceivable that reductions in size will improve quality.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

As with any set of forecasts, particularly those predicting human behavior, the assumptions used in arriving at the following enrollment projections are at least as important as the resulting figures. The objective of making and publishing such forecasts is largely to focus attention on the assumptions used and thus, hopefully, enlighten those concerned regarding changes in the behavior of literally hundreds of thousands of people which will have to occur if the forecasts are to be significantly altered. Ultimately, there is little question whether the projections which follow will miss the mark; they will. The more important question is what actions the state's institutions of higher education can and will take to alter the enrollment picture of the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Assumptions

The most important assumptions in regard to enrollment forecasting in the current environment are those regarding change in the percentage of the traditional college age group attending an institution of higher education and change in the number of older students expected to attend. Important to the projections for the individual institutions and types of institutions are assumptions regarding the portion of the available student pool a given institution will attract and geographic area from which the institution will draw students. Finally, assumptions regarding such factors as retention of enrolled students will affect the final projections.

The enrollment projections contained in this report assume that the percentage of traditional college age youth attending will not change. As indicated in the section of this report describing demographic trends, this may be a somewhat optimistic assumption due to the increasing proportion of this age group which will be of minority heritage. Though we can certainly hope that the high school completion rate of black and Hispanic youth will improve in the coming decade, at present their increasing representation in this age group would suggest that increased effort will be necessary just to maintain the present high school completion rate of the age group as a whole. Furthermore, there is some reason to believe that the greater growth in rural areas of the state may have a very slight negative effect on the college attendance rate.

The second assumption contained in the enrollment projections which follow is that there will be only modest growth in the number of nontraditional age people attending college during the projected period. Assumptions regarding nontraditional students have, of course, been key to differences among many national enrollment projections and the assumption in this case will no doubt meet with some objection. Ultimately, the Coordinating Board and others examining higher education policies in the state will have to make informed judgment regarding this question. The staff and enrollment projection consultant have chosen to assume that nontraditional students will not greatly offset the declining number of more traditional students at most of the institutions primarily because this assumption is consistent with current enrollment profiles. The projections contained in **Master Plan III** were based in part on the assumption that nontraditional age enrollments would grow at a rate that had not materialized by 1980. Only at the community colleges do the number of older students represent a large proportion of the undergraduate population, particularly of the full-time student body. This fact is reflected in the much more modest decline in enrollment projected for the short-term future in the community college sector.

In the longer term (ten years out) the staff and the consultant have assumed that even at the community colleges the effects of older students will be somewhat diminished in offsetting the decline in traditional age students. This is due primarily to the belief that much of the growth in the number of such students participating in higher education in the last decade has been due to a catch up effort by those who had not had the opportunity to attend at a more traditional age. Women have accounted for a very high proportion of the increasing number of older students attending during the last decade. Yet during the same period, women of traditional college age have attended in ever increasing numbers, until this last fall when the trend gave some appearance of leveling out.[2] Thus, an increasing proportion of those reaching nontraditional college age will have had the opportunity to attend college and are less likely to enroll for reasons of catching up. While this phenomenon will probably be offset somewhat by those returning for retraining, students seeking retraining are less apt to enroll for a full two year or four year program. Furthermore, it is important to note that, while older students of all ages have been increasing in numbers, the numbers fall off very sharply beyond the mid-thirties age range and that by the late 1980's the number of people in the 24 to 35 age range will have begun to fall.

In preparing the projections contained in this report the staff had the greatest difficulty resolving the question of an individual institution's ability to attract students in an increasingly competitive environment. The staff and the projection consultant finally opted to leave the institution's market share of the traditional age freshmen from each geographic area constant at the same percentage as the average of the last few years of actual data. Thus, the projections for each sector assume that some sectors will not maintain or increase their enrollments at the expense of others. While this assumption may not be realistic, the staff did not feel that other assumptions were particularly beneficial to this present objective.

The staff also assumed that institutions would continue to draw their students from the same geographic areas as in the recent past. As indicated in the section of this report describing demographic changes in Missouri's population by region, this assumption has differential effects on individual institutions and, consequently, on the sector totals reported herein. Whether this is a realistic assumption is certainly open to question, but a change in either this assumption or the one regarding market share would, of course, make very little difference in the grand total of the projections.

One assumption which could have considerable impact on the total enrollment projections, particularly for the short term, is the assumption regarding retention from one year to the next of those students who have enrolled but not graduated. For these projections the retention rates have been held constant at current levels. Improving the retention of already enrolled students probably offers as much opportunity to modify these projections as any other step the institutions can take, especially since research indicates that a very large proportion of those students who drop out do so for reasons other than a lack of satisfactory academic achievement. However, it should be noted that figures on those students who currently leave an instituion before completing a program of studies include a large portion of the more than 12,000 undergraduate students who currently transfer from one Missouri institution to another in a given year (see the March 12, 1983 report of the Commissioner to Coordinating Board on transfer and articulation).

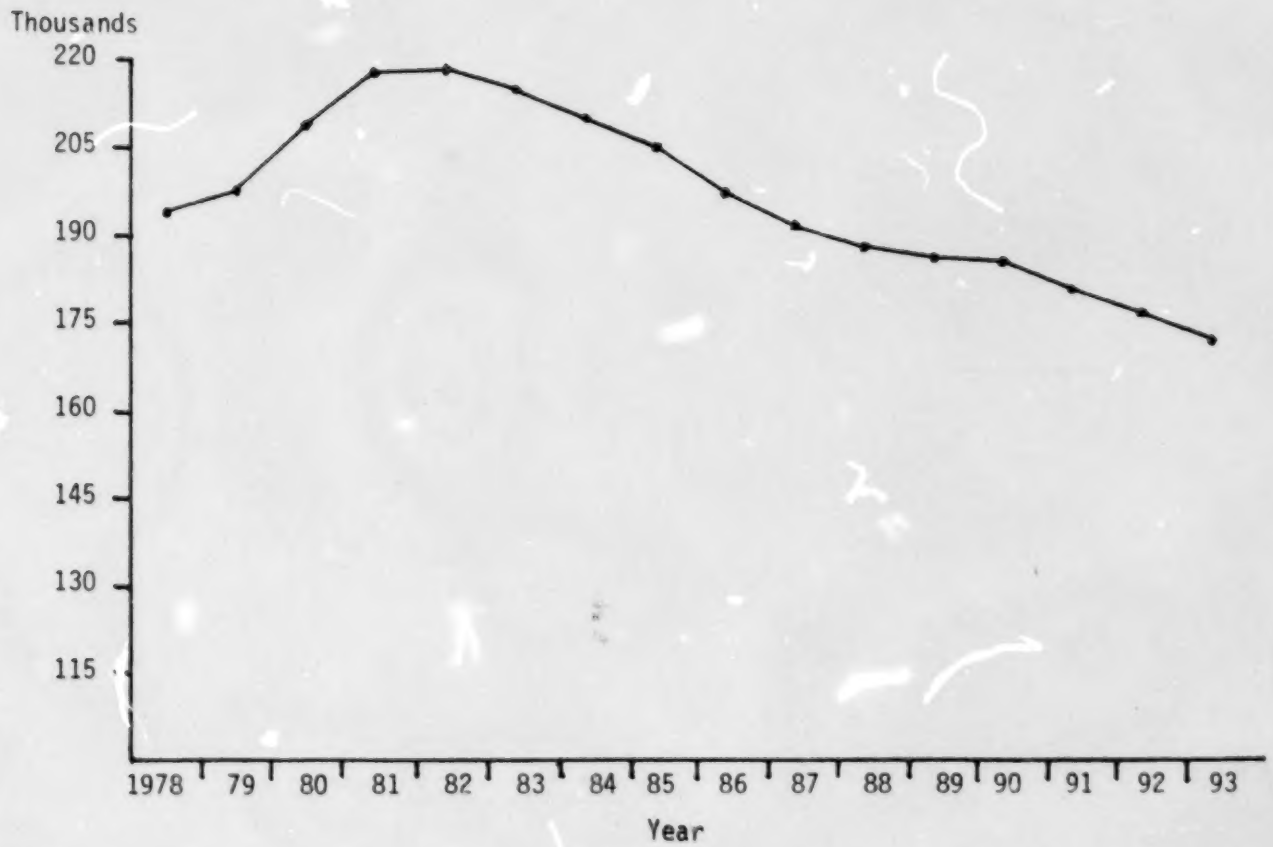
These are the assumptions addressed by the computer program used to develop the enrollment projections reported on the following pages. It bears repeating that these projections will almost certainly prove wrong to some degree, but it is the Coordinating Board staff's view that the forecasts will be proved significantly wrong only to the extent that the state's higher education community takes carefully planned action to address these assumptions. Furthermore, the staff believes that those assumptions which affect the total enrollment projections significantly are not subject to change unless the state's colleges and universities are prepared to take on rather dramatic revisions of their missions. For example, sufficiently increasing the number of nontraditional students at institutions other than the community colleges to offset the declining number of people under 25 years of age would require significantly greater emphasis on classes offered at night and away from the campus for those institutions located in predominantly rural areas of the state. Though it seems likely that most of the state's colleges and universities will make some significant accommodations to the needs of nontraditional students, to do so to the extent necessary to offset the loss of traditional age students would appear to be quite expensive.

Enrollment Projections

Display #9 graphically illustrates the Coordinating Board staff's projection that total enrollment will decline somewhat gradually through the next few years and then, beginning in about 1985, begin a much sharper downturn. This decline is expected to level off a little in the late 1980's and then fall further in the early 1990's. Display #10 summarizes the changes at six year intervals and records overall declines from 1981 levels of 12.6 percent and 21.5 percent for 1987 and 1993 respectively.

The gradual decline in enrollments over the next few years followed by the rather sudden drop in the mid-1980's is due in part to the nature of the comparable curve in high school enrollments and in part to the lag effect caused by relatively large high school graduating classes which are currently in the prime college attendance years. One of the first, though relatively small, adjustments of this nature can be expected in the coming year as the peak of the state's high school graduation curve was reached in 1979.

DISPLAY #9. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR ALL MISSOURI COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1978 TO 1993



Display #10 indicates significant difference between various sectors in the level of enrollment expected for each of the benchmark years shown. These differences, though due to the complex interaction of a number of variables, are primarily the result of the relative dependence of the institutions in each sector on traditional age students and to the geographic areas from which the institutions currently draw their students. Thus, the community colleges show a very modest change by 1987 followed by a greater change in the early 1990's reflecting the onset of a decline in the 25 to 34 age range from which community colleges draw a large number of students. Similarly, the state colleges and universities are generally less dependent than a number of the independent institutions on traditional age students, primarily due to graduate programs. However, this factor varies considerably within these sectors and is, in some cases, offset by location in a geographic area which has experienced markedly lower or higher than average change in the youthful population.

DISPLAY #10. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR MISSOURI HIGHER EDUCATION ASSUMING CONSTANT MARKET SHARES AND STUDENT MIX

	1981	1987	% Change	1993	% Change
Univ. of Mo.	56,180	49,850	-11.3%	44,873	-20.1%
State Four-year	57,584	50,921	-11.6%	45,941	-20.2%
State Two-year	56,937	53,886	-5.4%	48,627	-14.6%
Indep. Univ.	20,179	15,875	-21.3%	14,162	-29.8%
Indep. Four-year	25,788	18,913	-26.7%	16,670	-35.4%
Indep. Two-year	1,104	860	-22.1%	772	-30.1%
TOTAL	**217,772**	**190,305**	**-12.6%**	**171,045**	**-21.5%**

For comparative purposes the revised enrollment projections presented in this report are compared on Display #11 to the two sets of projections on pages 14 and 15 of **Master Plan III**. As can be seen from this display, the revised projections are very close to the less optimistic projections of the master plan. Similarly, the actual enrollment for 1980 was very close to, though slightly below, the less optimistic forecast contained in the master plan.

DISPLAY #11. COMPARISON OF MASTER PLAN III ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS TO 1980 ACTUAL ENROLLMENT AND REVISED PROJECTIONS

	1980	1985	1990
Master Plan III Projections (Optimistic)	219,237	216,033	192,405
Alternate Master Plan III Projections	210,426	205,460	180,089
Actual for 1980 and Revised Projections	208,905	202,327	183,912

1. David W. Breneman, The Coming Enrollment Crisis: What Every Trustee Must Know, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Washington, 1982, page 17.

2. "Fall Enrollments at Public and Private Institutions," The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 24, 1982.

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